

Virginia Defense Force

Instructor Development Course

By

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Course Objectives

- At the end of this course, you will be able to identify:
 - Principles of Adult Learners.
 - Understand what constitutes an effective education instructional program.
 - Apply these principles to the VDF Programs of Instruction.
 - Develop and present a lesson plan

Course Agenda

- Principles of Adult Learners.
- Effective education instructional programs.
- Application to Virginia State Defense Force Programs of Instruction.

■ Principles of Adult Learners.

Principles of Adult Learners

- Adults are *autonomous* and *self-directed*.
- They need to be free to direct themselves. You as the instructor must actively involve adult participants in the learning process and serve as facilitators for them.
- Specifically, you must get participants' perspectives about their own experiences within their professional field and determining what areas they may need additional assistance with or additional instruction in.
- You as the instructor must be sure to act as a facilitator, guiding participants to their own knowledge in addition to supplying them with facts.
- Finally, you must show participants how the class will help them reach their goals (e.g., via passing the practical exercises, final exam).

Principles of Adult Learners

- Adults have accumulated a foundation of *life experiences* and *knowledge* that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education.
- They need to connect learning to this knowledge/experience base. To help them do so, you as the instructor should draw out participants' experience and knowledge which is relevant to the topic.
- You must relate theories and concepts to the participants and recognize the value of experience in learning.

Principles of Adult Learners

Adults are *goal-oriented*.

Upon enrolling in this course, they usually know what goal they want to attain. They, therefore, appreciate an educational program that is organized and has clearly defined elements.

Instructors must show participants how this class will help them attain their goals. This classification of goals and course objectives must be done early in the course.

Principles of Adult Learners

Adults are *relevancy-oriented*.

They must see a reason for learning something.

Learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them.

Therefore, instructors must identify objectives for adult participants before the course begins.

This means, also, that theories and concepts must be related to a setting familiar to participants. This need can be fulfilled by letting participants choose projects that reflect their own interests.

Principles of Adult Learners

Adults are *practical*, focusing on the aspects of a lesson most useful to them in their work.

They may not be interested in knowledge for its own sake.

Instructors must tell participants explicitly how the lesson will be useful to them on the job.

Respect for the student

As do all learners, adults need to be shown *respect*.

Instructors must acknowledge the wealth of experiences that adult participants bring to the classroom.

These adults should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and allowed to voice their opinions freely in class.

Motivation

Another aspect of adult learning is motivation.
At least six factors serve as sources of motivation
for adult learning:

- Social relationships
- External expectations
 - Social welfare
- Personal advancement
 - Escape/Stimulation
 - Cognitive interest

Motivation

- **Social relationships:** to make new friends, to meet a need for associations and friendships.
- **External expectations:** to comply with instructions from someone else; to fulfill the expectations or recommendations of someone with formal authority.
- **Social welfare:** to improve ability to serve mankind, prepare for service to the community, and improve ability to participate in community work.

Motivation

- **Personal advancement:** to achieve higher status in a job, secure professional advancement, and stay abreast of competitors.
- **Escape/Stimulation:** to relieve boredom, provide a break in the routine of home or work, and provide a contrast to other exacting details of life.
- **Cognitive interest:** to learn for the sake of learning, seek knowledge for its own sake, and to satisfy an inquiring mind.

Motivation

- Unlike children and teenagers, adults have many responsibilities that they must balance against the demands of learning.
- Because of these responsibilities, adults have *barriers against participating in learning*.
- Some of these barriers include lack of time, money, confidence, or interest, lack of information about opportunities to learn, scheduling problems, "red tape," and problems with child care and transportation.

Motivation as a barrier

What motivates adult learners?

- Typical motivations include a requirement for competence or licensing, an expected (or realized) promotion, job enrichment, a need to maintain old skills or learn new ones, a need to adapt to job changes, or the need to learn in order to comply with company directives.
- Your challenge is to keep experienced learners as interested in material they are already familiar with as the inexperienced ones usually are.

Motivation as a barrier

What motivates adult learners?

- The best way to motivate adult learners is simply to *enhance* their reasons for enrolling and *decrease* the barriers.
- Instructors must learn why their students are enrolled (the motivators); they have to discover what is keeping them from learning. Then the instructors must plan their motivating strategies.
- A successful strategy includes showing adult learners the relationship between training and an expected promotion.

Motivation as a barrier

What motivates adult learners?

- Instructors must remember that learning occurs within each individual as a continual process throughout life.
- People learn at different speeds, so it is natural for them to be anxious or nervous when faced with a learning situation.
- Positive reinforcement by the instructor can enhance learning, as can proper timing of the instruction.

Motivation as a barrier

What motivates adult learners?

- Learning results from stimulation of the senses.
- In some people, one sense is used more than others to learn or recall information.
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- Instructors should present materials that stimulates as many senses as possible in order to increase their chances of teaching success.
- Use the multi-media approach.

Elements of learning

- There are four critical elements of learning that must be addressed to ensure that participants learn. These elements are:
 - **motivation**
 - **reinforcement**
 - **retention**
 - **transference**

Elements of learning

Motivation

- If the participant does not recognize the need for the information (or has been offended or intimidated), all of the instructor's effort to assist the participant to learn will be in vain. The instructor must establish rapport with participants and prepare them for learning; this provides motivation. Instructors can motivate students via several means:
- **Set a feeling or tone for the lesson.**
 - Instructors should try to establish a friendly, open atmosphere that shows the participants they will help them learn.

Elements of learning

Motivation

- **Set an appropriate level of concern.**
 - The level of tension must be adjusted to meet the level of importance of the objective.
 - If the material has a high level of importance, a higher level of tension/stress should be established in the class.
 - However, people learn best under low to moderate stress; if the stress is too high, it becomes a barrier to learning.
- **Set an appropriate level of difficulty.**
 - The degree of difficulty should be set high enough to challenge participants but not so high that they become frustrated by information overload.
 - The instruction should predict and reward participation, culminating in success.

Elements of learning

Motivation

- In addition, participants need specific knowledge of their learning results (*feedback*).
 - Feedback must be specific, not general.
 - Participants must also see a *reward* for learning. The reward does not necessarily have to be monetary; it can be simply a demonstration of benefits to be realized from learning the material.
 - Finally, the participant must be **interested** in the subject. Interest is directly related to reward. Adults must see the benefit of learning in order to motivate themselves to learn the subject.

Elements of learning

Reinforcement

- Reinforcement is a very necessary part of the teaching/learning process; through it, instructors encourage correct modes of behavior and performance.
- *Positive reinforcement* is normally used by instructors who are teaching participants new skills. As the name implies, positive reinforcement is "good" and reinforces "good" (or positive) behavior.
- *Negative reinforcement* is normally used by instructors teaching a new skill or new information. It is useful in trying to change modes of behavior. The result of negative reinforcement is *extinction* -- that is, the instructor uses negative reinforcement until the "bad" behavior disappears, or it becomes extinct.

Elements of learning

Reinforcement

- When instructors are trying to change behaviors (old practices), they should apply both positive and negative reinforcement.
- Reinforcement should be part of the teaching-learning process to ensure correct behavior. Instructors need to use it on a frequent and regular basis early in the process to help the students retain what they have learned. Then, they should use reinforcement only to maintain consistent, positive behavior.

Elements of learning

Retention

- Students must retain information from classes in order to benefit from the learning.
 - The instructors' jobs are not finished until they have assisted the learner in retaining the information.
 - In order for participants to retain the information taught, they must see a meaning or purpose for that information. They must also understand and be able to interpret and apply the information.
 - This understanding includes their ability to assign the correct degree of importance to the material.

Elements of learning

Retention

- The amount of retention will be directly affected by the degree of original learning.
 - Simply stated, if the participants did not learn the material well initially, they will not retain it well either.
- Retention by the participants is directly affected by their amount of practice during the learning.
 - Instructors should emphasize retention and application. After the students demonstrate correct (desired) performance, they should be urged to practice to maintain the desired performance.

Elements of learning

Transference

- Transfer of learning is the result of training
 - It is the ability to use the information taught in the course but in a new setting. As with reinforcement, there are two types of transfer: *positive* and *negative*.
- Positive transference, like positive reinforcement, occurs when the participants uses the behavior taught in the course.
- Negative transference, again like negative reinforcement, occurs when the participants do not do what they are told not to do. This results in a positive (desired) outcome.

Elements of learning

Transference

- Transference is most likely to occur in the following situations:
 - *Association* -- participants can associate the new information with something that they already know.
 - *Similarity* -- the information is similar to material that participants already know; that is, it revisits a logical framework or pattern.
 - *Degree of original learning* -- participant's degree of original learning was high.
 - *Critical attribute element* -- the information learned contains elements that are extremely beneficial (critical) on the job

Effective Education Instructional Programs

Basic principles:

- Enable all students to master basic skills
- Provide relevant courses to meet student, employer and community needs
- Set standards of accountability which will ensure program effectiveness
- Strengthen and expand partnership efforts.

Principle 1: Basic skills should be mastered by all students.

- Diagnose each learner's needs and strengths
- Provide each learners frequent progress reports
- Make sure basic skills are applied in meaningful ways
- Provide students with a Basic Skills Performance Report

Principle 1: Methodology

- Assess student experience during course introductions by having students introduce themselves with a brief biography
- Provide quizzes at the end of major subject areas
- Conduct Practical Exercises and hands on training as appropriate
- Conduct Exams as a means to gauge student learning

Principle 1: Application

- Pair up experienced students with inexperienced students to enhance learning.
- Allocate an appropriate amount of time for all subjects.
- Elicit feedback from the students during the instructional period to ensure learning.
- Use the quizzes as a means to ensure students are learning the material.
- If needed, allocate additional time in areas student may show vulnerability in.

Principle 1: Reinforcement

- During training, Practical Exercises allow the students to put into practice what they have learned during training.
- During monthly training, allocate training time to reinforce those areas which over the year that have been identified as being weak or needing additional instruction.
- Practical Exercises should be used during sustainment training as a means of reinforcement or to place additional stresses on soldiers as a means of breaking complacency.

Principle 2: Course content should be directly related to learner and projected missions.

- Develop a systematic review process to ensure programs remain relevant and responsive to client needs
- Assess student learning needs and expectations
- Provide a variety of instructional techniques to meet the needs and styles of students
- Develop or adopt new curriculum and delivery techniques when needed

Principle 2: Methodology

- Course content, although derived from multiple sources (FEMA, VDEM) is not static.
- Course content should be dynamic and current based on immediate and developing threats and needs.
- Elicit feedback from the students in the form of student surveys to ensure that:
 - Learning is being facilitated
 - The appropriate amount of time is being spent on each subject

Principle 2: Application

- Stay current on references and world/local affairs.
- Use current events or incidents to illustrate major learning objectives, as in responses to disasters, either nationally or internationally.
- Use a variety of delivery means to enhance learning, such as video clips, newspaper clippings, photos, government handouts/brochures.
- Modify the basic training as needed based on feedback from the student surveys.

Principle 2: Reinforcement:

- Use real life incidents or situations over the past year as discussion points with the students.
- Link these situations as real world applications to doctrinal theory or manual principles.
- Use sustainment training as a means to elicit feedback from the officers on how they have applied their training in actual situations.

Principle 3: Partnership efforts should be expanded and strengthened.

- Search for ways to expand and strengthen existing partnerships
- Examine the potential for new partnerships
- Share resources with other units
- Involve the PAO as a means to recognize training events as a recruiting and retention tool

Principle 3: Methodology

- Elicit feedback/input from the soldiers who may know subject matter experts who could enhance training.
- Other agencies may be able to enhance your training program by offering different perspectives as subject matter experts (Police Department, Fire and Rescue, Office of Emergency Management)
- Seek permission to participate in other agencies' training, especially in situational exercises such as emergency response drills.

Principle 3: Application

- Invite agencies with whom you operate or function with to observe your training sessions
- Participate if possible in outside agencies' exercises.

Principle 4: Programs must have a system that ensures accountability

- Develop standards that measure and evaluate the program
- Be attentive to all of adult education's clientele
- Use the accountability system to improve decision making

Principle 4: Methodology

- Quizzes, exams, practical exercises, qualification testing measure whether or not the students successfully pass the training
- Student surveys allow them to provide you feedback on the material you provided.
- Feedback from your students informs you as to whether or not your training program is effective and where the program vulnerabilities may lie.

Principle 4: Application

- Documenting the training occurred is important for audit and standardization purposes.
- Examinations, testing and qualification are designed to ensure that standards are met: Ensure the students understand this.

Principle 4: Reinforcement

- Practical exercises can be used to enhance basic knowledge and create more complex real world scenarios that stress the students with situations they may encounter.

Virginia Defense Force Training Programs

TASK, CONDITIONS, AND STANDARDS

Task, conditions, and standards are the Army's formula for training tasks to standard.

- Task: A clearly defined and measurable activity accomplished by individuals and organizations. Tasks are specific activities that contribute to the accomplishment of encompassing missions or other requirements.
- Conditions: The circumstances and environment in which the task is to be performed.
- Standard: The minimum acceptable proficiency required in the performance of the training task under a specific set of conditions.

Program considerations

- Instructor/student ratio should be appropriate
 - Ensure all students are engaged
 - Don't have students standing around
- Practical exercises allow students hands-on experience
- Level of difficulty should be appropriate

Program considerations (cont)

- Perishable skills need more frequent exercising
- Make practical exercises as realistic as possible
- Use role players when appropriate

Remember, you control the classroom.

- Set a positive tone; you are here to teach the officers, not impress them.
- Our goal is 100% graduation.
- Train the students to the standard; set a good learning pace, but don't overwhelm them.
- Adjust the schedule as needed depending on the feedback from the students.

Remember, you control the classroom.

- If you start having attitude or behavior issues with a student during the session, address it immediately one on one with the student. If a student is disruptive or unprofessional, even after one on one counseling, take the issue to the chain of command.
- Generally, talk to the slides, do not read the slides to the students.

Remember, you control the classroom.

- Remember that in many cases, you may only see these students during training. Now is the time to put the information out to them.
- Use real world examples and personal experience to highlight the main teaching points.
- Elicit feedback from the students on their own experiences as this enhances the main points.

For a copy of this briefing

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Questions??